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"Ignorance productive of Atheism, Faction,
and Superstition;"

A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

ON

COMMENCEMENT SUNDAY, JULY 1, 1798.

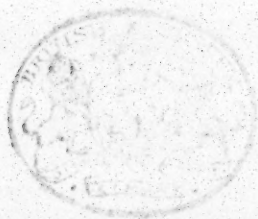
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Chancellor and Heads of Houses.*

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To the Rev. and Learned
ROBERT TOWERSON CORY, D. D.

VICE-CHANCELLOR,

The Rev. and Learned the Heads of Houses,

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

THIS DISCOURSE,

Printed at their Request,

AND DICTATED BY A WARM AND AFFECTIONATE ZEAL FOR THE HONOR, PROSPERITY, AND PERMANENCY OF THE ANCIENT AND VENERABLE SEMINARIES OF RELIGION, LEARNING, AND LOYALTY, OVER WHICH THEY PRESIDE,

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By their obliged and devoted Servant,

THOMAS RENNELL.

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HOSEA, c. iv, v. 6.

“ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”



THE misery of ignorance and the benefits of knowledge all mankind agree in confessing, and therefore on this head it should seem we have no need to have recourse to Prophetical illumination. But in many obvious conclusions, difficulties occur, or questions involving difficulty in a proximate stage of enquiry. When our blessed Lord declared unto Pilate, *“ for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness of the truth,”* Pilate proposed a question sufficiently embarrassing to one not instructed in the wisdom which the Redeemer

B

deemer of Mankind came from heaven to teach—" *What is truth ?*" A question certainly not put captiously or sophistically, but with such a desire of information as the state of opinions at that time rendered highly rational and justifiable in the Roman governor. Thus, with regard to a subject so congenial to truth as knowledge, if a similar question were put, before an answer could be returned, much thought would be requisite, even among those who are habituated to reflection and discussion. Those possibly *least* qualified to return an answer, would be most forward and precipitate in attempting it. Surely, without any desire to descend to the meanest employment of the understanding, a cavil upon the definition of a word, it might be asked, whether the nature of knowledge, *general* or *particular*, *primary* or *subordinate*, was enquired into? If the existence of a knowledge, to which all other is instrumental and subservient, could be traced, which points to the end, which regulates the acquisition, which ascertains the boundaries of

of

of all other branches, can be proved, and is admitted, what is it, and where is it to be found? I can hardly bring myself to imagine that in the most informed assembly, the resolution of this question would be either immediate or uniform.—Farther, if there *is* a knowledge, on which not only the improvements, and the refinements, but the very existence of society depends, the state of this must be in its nature most deeply awful and interesting. It was the language of Pagan Philosophy that such a knowledge *did* exist.* The transcendent powers of natural genius, which the Almighty, for purposes infinitely wise, vouchsafed to some of the high architects of heathen wisdom, enabled them to discern, that all science, as exercised in its inferior provinces, required some principle of a sublimer nature, which might afford cement, consistence, and basis to every subordinate effort and exertion of the human intellect. In exploring this principle, they however failed—and instead of substantial truth,

Note 1.

were

were lost in the delusive twilight of a magnificent though ineffectual and perpetually baffled metaphysical speculation. But those upon whom the "*Day star*" of revelation, either Patriarchal, Mosaick, or Evangelical arose, found in the distinct discovery of a moral Governor of the Universe, and the full and unequivocal display of his attributes, that knowledge which marks the origin, the limits, and destination of every faculty, talent, and acquisition.

When then we are instructed by Almighty God that there is a knowledge, "*for the lack of which a people is destroyed,*" we must infer both from the reason of the thing, and the concurring testimony of revelation, that it is the knowledge of himself, his nature, his providence, and his power. There are very few instances where a people possessing this knowledge is destroyed, even by external violence, none I believe by internal causes of convulsion and ruin. When then the state of man is disordered, not only in one nation, but "*as the lightning that*
lighteneth

lighteneth out of one part of the earth shineth even to the other," so a shock and conflagration is communicated to every civilized nation under the Sun; when, in some, Ruin has had its perfect work in its most hideous forms, and in almost every other the tempest seems ripe for bursting,—to search for this in any other than in the divine counsels, is to be blind indeed to the operations of Him whose working is from everlasting to everlasting. If it be true that knowledge and wisdom are the stability of prosperous times, the converse will equally claim our attention, that “*for lack of knowledge a people is destroyed.*” To enquire, with as much conciseness as possible, into the moral causes included in both these scriptural propositions, as they appear to exist in our own country, to mark their operation and effects in the events taking place within our observation, cannot be in times of common danger and alarm alien either to the occasion on which we are assembled, or unsuited to the attention

tion of those to whom it is my immediate province to address myself.

I am extremely aware that strong exception will be made to a statement which represents any deficiency in Wisdom in an age calling itself knowing and enlightened beyond all former example. That such is the character of the times in any branch of learning might fairly be doubted. But it is not my intention, to institute a regular comparison between the various acquisitions and exertions of ourselves and our predecessors. In compass and command of language, in simplicity and energy of diction, in orderly and comprehensive thought, in profoundness of learning, and in the detail of accurate and patient investigation, I cannot help thinking that we should be unwise in contesting the superiority. But it is more to my purpose to mark those intellectual habits which interfere with the cultivation of that knowledge which directs, superintends, and sanctifies every portion of wisdom we can acquire. The language of the ancient
Theology

Theology of the English Church is, that*
 “ we are capable of God both by Understanding and by Will; by Understanding, as he is that sovereign truth which comprehends the rich treasures of all wisdom; by Will, as he is that Sea of Goodness whereof whoso tasteth shall thirst no more.” With *such* principles of wisdom predominating in their intellect, and reigning in their affections, did our predecessors in these seats of learning, for a long course of time subsequent to the Reformation, proceed in their literary career. Whatever was the region of science which they explored, whatever branch of learning they cultivated, they steadily kept in view the Great Source of every good and perfect gift, in whom, by whom, thro’ whom, for whom are all things. Not only in treatises where Theology was the professed object, was divine knowledge diffused, but in those where the connections was less visible and direct. The divine administration was perpetually pointed to by the Historian; the

* HOOKER.

passions of men considered as mean and subordinate instruments to the steady dispensation of justice or mercy, of reward or punishment, to communities of men either acknowledging the hand of the Almighty, or presumptuously opposing his counsels and commands. In examining the moral system of man, and his powers, inclinations, and habits in the attainment of happiness, Religion was considered as the polar star of morality. Still more in Natural Philosophy was the finger of God, whether in his outward structure, the laws of the material world, and the motions of the heavenly bodies perpetually pointed out and designated. Every work was in some measure a school of divine knowledge ; and yet no man alive will, if conversant in the works of these men, presume to say that their efforts were cramped or confined by their piety. Was the political sagacity of a HOOKER the less conspicuous for the perpetual eagerness he expressed to found every maxim, and the soundness of all regimen, on the love and admiration of Almighty

mighty God? Was the wisdom of a BACON, in discerning the provinces, in marking the limits, and in pointing to the advancement of moral and scientific truth, the less sublime for his reverential awe of the Deity, and his zealous and orthodox profession of the faith of Christ, in all the magnanimous humility of Christian abasement? Is the history of a CLARENDON less grave, splendid, instructive, and dignified, for that spirit of constant piety which pervades and upholds every sentiment and reflection? Are the researches of these men *less* profound, their intellect *less* penetrating, their knowledge *less* exuberant, their genius *less* lighted, and their eloquence *less* enflamed, than that of those who are now employed in the same provinces of learning and science? Be this as it may—certain is it, that the channels by which the knowledge of religion was communicated, are neither so numerous or abundant as in the days of our fathers; and rarely is it indeed that, except in works directly treating of Theology, any pious reference, even when the subject most points

to it, is made to the dispensations and moral government of Almighty God. In a variety of causes will this be traced ; in none more than in PRIDE, or in its abortion, VANITY. The obstructions which these have interposed to the general acceptance of the Gospel, are greater than expression can reach. There is a knowledge, "*for the lack of which a people is destroyed ;*" and there is, on the contrary, a knowledge by which "*every man is brutish, every founder is confounded by his graven image, for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. They are vanity, and the works of errors, and in the time of their visitation they shall perish.*" Such idols are the high perogatives of human nature and human reason, which modern philosophy calls upon its disciples to assert. This engenders a fondness for PARADOX, than which nothing can be a greater obstruction to *all* knowledge, and *particularly* to the knowledge of God and his dispensations. All PARADOX, even in its most ingenious form, is mere debility, and

and in no instance a mark of energy or strength of mind. And it is observable that in proportion to the love for this, the intellectual appetite is palled and vitiated for the perception and investigation of genuine truth. Hence those mischievous abstractions, which when introduced into Religion, Morals and Politics, have from causes comparatively mean produced the most extended and tremendous effects. It is a truth, to which I believe very few exceptions occur, that paradoxes are but the panders and fatellites to the passions. Rarely indeed do we find a paradox which is *friendly* to virtue or moral obligation. They all, by different modes, tend to enflame this principle, which expelled our first parents from Paradise, “*ye shall be as Gods.*” They tend to disincline man to what an eminent Theologian* called, with a pregnancy of wisdom and piety, “a creature state.” From this source a certain strange compound of fierceness and petulance is generated: Modesty, and the off-

* Whicheott,

spring of Modesty, patient Industry, is annihilated. Man “ by his knowledge becomes truly *brutish* ;” he is inclined to overbear the humble, annoy the simple, and oppress the weak. But when to this strong predisposing principle, the indolence of an effeminate, and the luxury and dissipation of a sensual age is added, the evil becomes radical and inveterate. In a short time there will (we have reason to fear) remain but two descriptions of persons among us, either those who think not at all, or those whose imaginations are active indeed, but “ *continually evil*.” In the former, the fountains of knowledge are choaked up by indolence, sensuality, and stupor ; in the latter, the inebriation of pride, and the incentives of tribunitian ambition, have entirely intercepted a view of the dependencies of Laws, human and divine, and those connected relations by which man is bound to man, and the creature to the Creator. Their “ *foolish heart*,” in the language of the Apostle, “ *is darkened*.” They are “ *wilfully ignorant* ” of the

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the necessary imperfections of that polity which embraces a very limited portion of our existence; which imperfections, in truth, a reference to the civil records of all ages and countries, and a consideration of the very nature of the government of a Being disordered by guilt, distracted by passion, and darkened by ignorance, points out as inevitable and invincible. If man *had* that knowledge of his own nature, which can never be understood without a discernment of his dependency upon the CAUSE of his existence, his deductions and conclusions in moral and political truth, would exempt him from a possibility of that dupery, to which the frenzy of the passions, and the artifices of those who are skilled to turn that frenzy and that dupery to their own base purposes, renders men in the early stages of life, and in the rude shoot and strong exuberance of the faculties, peculiarly liable. Of the *principles*, I do not say of the *detail*, of political science, A SOUND THEOLOGY is the only sure and steady basis.*

* Note 2.

Having in a manner, perhaps somewhat too general, though I trust not inapplicable to the opinions, events, and circumstances of the present times, adverted to the causes of that "*lack of knowledge*," by which "*a people is destroyed*," I proceed to trace the operations, by which a destruction so extended in its consequences, has been effected.

It has been already asserted that the master-spring of every principle which can permanently secure the stability of a people, is the fear and knowledge of Almighty God. I am greatly inclined to think that had the different Potentates in Europe sufficiently discerned the value of this knowledge, the events we now deplore would have never taken place. The first operation of a principle of ATHEISM, and perhaps one of the most formidable in its consequences, is that which leads political men to conceive of CHRISTIANITY, not as of a system deeply involving the personal and individual interest of mankind here and hereafter, but as of a mere State engine,
and

and a subordinate auxiliary to Civil police.* This was, I fear, a very prevalent opinion in various nations upon the Continent, even to that very day when the floodgates of desolation were opened upon them. But no *such* views of the Gospel will either be beneficial to man, or acceptable to God. Religion was not instituted (in the divine counsel I mean) for the purpose of *society* and *government*, but *society* and *government* for the purposes of *religion*. That *without* religion, government cannot permanently exist, is sufficiently evident: but we shall do well to observe, it is not only the cement and basis of social order and regimen, but its FINAL CAUSE. This sublime view the scripture exhibits to us in the “*Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world.*” This is that “*determined counsel and foreknowledge of God,*” which directs and adjusts the various revolutions of civil affairs, the rise and fall of empires, the progress, maturity, and decay of arts and learning, the impetuosity of human

* Note 3.

passions,

passions, the refinement of politicians, and every movement of the national communities of the earth, to the ultimate advancement of the Gospel of his Son, which said of old, "*to Cyrus, thou art my Shepherd, and to the Temple, thy foundation shall be laid.*" Had a solicitude to profess Christianity in its purity, and to disseminate it with zeal by various channels among the different orders of those committed to their charge, been more prevalent among the civil governors of Europe, all the doctrines of anarchy, all the absurd opinions, which have caused this accumulated destruction and ruin, would have shrunk from the lustre of divine truth, as the stars from the rising sun. When men admit or embrace the doctrines of the *Sovereignty of the People*, of the *Duty of Insurrection*, the *Natural Equality of Man*, his *inprescriptible and unalienable Right to be his own Legislator*, it is not that their understanding is deceived, but their passions enflamed. These shallow sophisms are in no degree believed by those who disseminate them,

them, whose meaning is to found upon them the severest and most relentless tyranny under which the human race ever yet groaned.* From such miserable artificers of fraud, Christian principles can alone protect us. Those, by referring all government to its *heavenly* original, enlarge the views, purify the passions, and by combining conscience with expediency, derive the measures of obedience from their true and genuine motives. How strong an obstacle true Religion interposes to the designs of factions, and the partisans of the modern codes of anarchy, is sufficiently evident from the inveterate malice which they uniformly bear to the smallest approximation to its principles or practice. And wise are they in their generation. When a principle of dependency upon God is removed, there is no longer room for the operation of beneficial laws, equal justice, or social subordination. It is impossible to erect genuine rational liberty on the ruins of conscience, or to rest conscience on any other basis

* Note 4.

than the word and the superintendence of a moral Governor. All the boasted liberty, founded on the maxims of litigious pride, is palpably and undeniably found to be nothing more than THE DOMINATION OF PASSION OPERATING BY PHYSICAL FORCE. To the plausible delusions of fraternity and equality, which were exhibited and propagated in France, had counsel been taken of God, other nations would not have lent a willing ear, but would have in time discerned, in the extravagant doctrines of unmeasurable licentiousness, that germ of PIRATICAL DEPREDATION from without, and severe INTERNAL DESPOTISM, which that ferocious and devoted nation is reciprocally inflicting and suffering.

But in other effects of the want of divine knowledge are we to trace the origin of the calamities which have overspread the earth, and specifically those which have lately menaced the stability and unity of the British empire. From an inadvertence, amounting nearly to judicial stupor, there has of late prevailed an obstinate repugnance

nance to trace and acknowledge the similar sources and congenial effects of Atheism and Superstition. Great surely is the ignorance of moral causes, which can suppose that the *one* of these controuls or counteracts the *other*. As *Atheism* presumptuously attempts to discard a moral government, in order to open a fearless unrestrained indulgence for the impetuosity of passion, so *Superstition* administers, upon a principle of commutation, to those same indulgences. It is utterly subversive of the two grand pillars of the divine administration, his Justice and his Mercy. It neither supposes unrighteousness to render men obnoxious to the former, or that real contrite reformation will through the mediatorial covenant in CHRIST place us within the abundant extent of the latter. *Without*, an abject veneration for priests, and a punctual and mechanical performance of idle ceremonies, the view of the placability of God is precluded and intercepted by Superstition: and *with* them, unlimited confidence and security to every excess is fraudulently

fraudulently exhibited. Thus are both *Atheism* and *Superstition* instruments of the general adversary of mankind. Their *origin* is in the wilful ignorance of God, and their *operation* in the merciless destruction of his creatures. So closely are they joined, that they act reciprocally as *cause* and *effect*: the one, in the order of divine justice, is frequently inflicted as a punishment of the other. That this connection should not be more clearly and generally discerned, sufficiently evinces, that however men may pride themselves upon their sagacity, there is a great lack of that knowledge which is the “stability” of a people. Pagan wisdom has in this instance far surpassed us, who might borrow light from better sources, and has considered, in one of its most masterly treatises, the origination of the one of these principles from the other, with a soundness of judgement, and a depth of observation, which even modern experience could have scarcely improved.* Surely therefore we may conclude that

* Note 5.

where

where *Atheism* abounds, *Superstition* is not far removed, and that the *converse* is equally true. Those who have duly and maturely weighed these important truths, whose philosophy has been tempered with a reverential awe of the dispensations of Providence, will not be at all surprised that after the wide ravages which Atheism and Anarchy have committed in various parts of Europe, when *they*, as it were, seemed tired, though not satiated with carnage and desolation, that, in a Sister Kingdom, POPISH SUPERSTITION should have started up, as an organ and auxiliary, in completing the work of confusion and devastation. It will not in the least startle the experience of *thoughtful* men, that after a severe conflict begun in France between Infidelity and Popery, after the complete devastation of the property, and the most savage cruelty inflicted upon the persons of the Romish Ecclesiastics, that unmoved by all this, Popery should in Ireland join its machinations with those of its furious antagonist against that Protestant establishment, which
had

had shewn so tolerant a spirit to that religion, and had in *this* kingdom exhibited such unbounded liberality and kindness to its exiled and distressed ministers, the victims of Atheistical ferocity—this, I say, will not at all startle those whose sentiments of Popery are derived from its authentic records, the essential principles of its construction, the invariable tenor of its conduct, and from the lessons of the most penetrating, profound, and judicious of our Theological predecessors. Neither, on the *other hand*, will those who have studied the springs of human action, be surprised that in both these kingdoms the most turbulent demagogues, and the loudest assertors of unbridled liberty, should lend every assistance, and hold forth every incentive, to extirpate the Protestant religion, and rivet the most abject system of moral and intellectual slavery on the Irish nation. WE, however, shall not, I trust, be so far deceived, as not to be aware that the *power* and *predominancy* of Popery, (for this is the true meaning of Catholic Emancipation) in *any part* of the empire,

empire, is utterly inconsistent with the quiet, order, and security of the rest,* and perfectly irreconcilable to the principles of that Revolution, of which it was the *united* glory to deliver us from POPERY and arbitrary Power. To the principles of that Revolution they can surely lay small claim, who are labouring to further that very project which the virtue of our Protestant ancestors rendered abortive, in the hands of the infatuated James the Second, and by the assistance of that *very nation* which co-operated with him in his unwarrantable designs.—From *such* assertors of civil and religious liberty, may Almighty God in his mercy defend us and our posterity!

Of these calamities, the true and permanent remedy will not be found in farther extension of civil privileges to the Papists, which experience has shewn to be of so small avail; a continued series of concession, conferred even to a blind and precipitate prodigality, unknown to the *wisdom* of our ancestors, seems to have

* Note 6.

instigated

instigated revolt, rather than produced conciliation, gratitude, or obedience. Neither can the application of force, solely I mean and ultimately, produce this desirable effect. *Force* cannot reach *opinion*: while the principles of the superstition which had so large a share in this revolt continue to be widely extended in Ireland, while they are encouraged by public sanction, and perpetuated by the erection and even Parliamentary endowment of Popish seminaries, the embers will for ever, under all circumstances, be ready to burst forth into wide and destructive ruin and conflagration. The *true* and radical remedy is to be sought in the vigilant exertions, constant residence, and pious zeal of the Protestant Clergy, in the recovery of the lower ranks among the Irish from that ignorance and barbarism in which they are designedly kept by the Romish Ecclesiastics; in the careful, persevering, and zealous dissemination of that scriptural and protestant light, for “*the lack of which a people is destroyed.*”*

* Note 7.

To conclude.—If the present disastrous state of human affairs, in all its extent and all its bearings, if the various foes by which civil security and social order is beset, are brought into review before us, we can ascribe it but to one source, a corruption of *morals*, produced by a previous depravation of the *opinions* of mankind. Under every external semblance of civilization, amidst the highest refinement of every ornamental art, a gross ignorance of Almighty God, of his dispensations, of the foundations of his revealed word, as laid in our own nature and corruption, and even in the moral history of man, has widely prevailed. And what surely constitutes a great, and *perhaps* remediless aggravation of this ignorance, is, that it has been associated in the superior ranks of the various countries of Europe, with the affectation of worldly wisdom, and the high boast of intellectual light; it was not the pitiable ignorance of poor uncultivated savages, but a wilful ignorance generated by calm presumption, solemn mockery, and contemptuous pride. Foreign politici-

ans, in the hardened refinement of their hearts, were weak enough to suppose that the civil purposes of religion would be answered by Superstition; and with an external reverence, and an internal contempt closed in with all the corruptions, idolatry, and bigotry of the Roman Church. But this superstition was a broken reed; it interposed not a single obstacle to this ruin and convulsion, but incalculably in many instances accelerated its progress. It rendered the minds of its poor senseless votaries a proper receptacle for the doctrines of Anarchy and Atheism. It is utterly false to say, that Religion was destroyed in France and Italy by the success of revolutionary arms and principles. That very Revolution was effected by the previous destruction of Religion. Upon the ruins caused by political refinement and Romish fraud and tyranny, was founded that fierce, superficial, and contemptuous system of Infidelity, dignified by the name of Philosophy. Hence have flowed those effects which have carried with them unexampled havock, and threaten
little

little short of universal extermination to the most flourishing and civilized communities of the world.

But I am persuaded that it will be the wisdom of this and similar ancient institutions, to discern the seat of the disease, and to apply with immediate industry what I firmly believe the only effectual remedy. If the events we deplore and deprecate arise from ignorance, error, and false opinion, it is only in an early knowledge and correction of those errors that this pestilential malady *can* be counteracted. If this destructive ignorance is specifically the ignorance of Almighty God and his dispensations, to revive and disseminate with activity the principles of a sound, Christian, and orthodox theology, will, I am convinced, be thought our best interest, as it is our bounden duty. This cannot be done without rendering Theology, in its *grand leading* principles (I do not say in its *detail*) a substantial, integrant, and indispensable part of education in this and other great preparatory seminaries. And indeed, in addition to the obligation

obligation we are under to God and our country to discharge this duty, I have no hesitation in asserting, that without combining the study of the sacred records with our other pursuits, we shall very imperfectly fulfil our office in the general promotion of learning and science. With skill in the learned languages, with historical and chronological research, with the study of the moral and metaphysical philosophy of Greece and Rome, and even the more elegant arts of poetry and eloquence, advancement in this study is closely connected; neither can any of these be carried to their *full* perfection, if this connection is broken and dissolved. I cannot but add, that to do this we have great encouragement, as the most eminent examples of masculine eloquence, profound thought, and vigorous argumentative powers, exhibited by our Theological writers, are such as to lay the foundation of eminence in *every* professional designation of the talents of the rising generation. I am persuaded that it will be needless for me to suggest to this venerable

body,

body, that it is our duty to direct these researches, not in the spirit of that floating scepticism which assumes the specious name of *free enquiry*, but according to the tried, sound, and evangelical faith of the English Church, to which our most zealous adherence is solemnly, voluntarily, and personally pledged, and which, notwithstanding the deplorable decay and apostacy of the times, is still most dear to all that is virtuous and honourable in the English nation. Well may it be said of our ecclesiastical and academical establishments, as of Saul and Jonathan of old, "*in their lives they were lovely and pleasant, and in their deaths they will not be divided.*" It will be our wisdom likewise carefully to check those habits of indolent dissipation which are a most serious and insurmountable obstacle to the substantial and systematical acquisition of all knowledge, but peculiarly disqualify the mind for the cultivation and perception of divine truth. In these retreats it is a considerable point gained, if ignorance and indolence are here rendered uncomfortable.

comfortable. The manners of our venerable predecessors might be considerably removed from the artificial elegance and the feeble politeness of what is commonly called the world, but they were likewise removed from its follies, corruptions, and affectation. Though frequently impelled by duty to controul the licentiousness, and to enforce the industry of young men, even by an apparent sternness of discipline, yet they never lost their affections, for they never forfeited their esteem. Those committed to their charge looked up to them as their parents in religion, virtue, and wisdom, and retained a filial and reverential attachment, both to them and the institutions of which they were guardians, to the latest moment of their lives.

I should feel myself greatly deficient in the high respect which is due from me to those before whom I now speak, if I were to appeal to the meaner motives of the personal interest they all have in these establishments, nor would it be decorous in me to suppose for a moment an inadvertency

tency to that maxim of ancient wisdom, "that all institutions are preserved only by an adherence to the principles and end for which they were instituted."* But we will anticipate that from a sense of sacred duty, the active exertions of this venerable body will correspond with the awful exigencies which demand them; and that in the support of learning, religion, and loyalty, its conduct will be such as might be expected from its ancient character, its original institution, and its high dignity; and that through your instrumentality, the torrent of *Superstition* and *Atheism*, *Faction* and *Anarchy*, will be effectually and maturely stemmed: that the clouds of ignorance will be dispelled, and the knowledge of God and his Christ will be once more the stability of our times. "*Then shall our fields bring forth their increase, and God even our God will give us his blessing.*"

* Note 8.

APPENDIX.

NOTE 1.

THIS is marked out by Plato, in what he terms the “*θεωρία παντός μεν χρόνου πάσης δὲ οὐσίας.*” *De Repub.* lib. VI. Both he and the other great luminary of the Pagan world, Aristotle, were equally desirous, though with some difference of method, to carry up this sublime study into Theology. *Vide Aristot. Metaphys.* lib. IV, chap. III. An investigation of the final causes of the various dispensations of Almighty God in the moral world, is, if conducted with calmness and humanity, one of the most useful employments of the human intellect. Extremes are certainly to be avoided, that of scepticism and inadvertence on the one hand, and precipitation and dogmatical presumption on the other. Under these principles I know of no subject so pregnant in important consequences as a consideration of the extremes of strength and weakness exhibited by the ancient Greek philosophers. At the very
moment

moment that the dawn of Divine Truth opens upon them, and the day seems bursting in full splendour, in that very moment (as those who are conversant in their writings well know) they are replunged into the profoundest abyss of intellectual night. This is particularly observable with regard to the three soundest and noblest sects among them, the Stoicks, the Platonists, and the Pythagoreans. After discerning and laying down the noblest principles concerning the moral and providential dispensations of God, they generally closed their researches in a mere metaphysical abstraction, in which even the personality of the First Great Cause, and the obvious distinction between the creature and the Creator, was lost in what is now denominated Spinozism and Fatalism. Their philosophy resembles the course of the Rhine, which, after traversing in a full, wide, and noble current, the finest countries in Europe, empties itself into the Ocean, in an obscure rivulet, which can scarcely be distinctly or definitely traced. These circumstances, if duly weighed, will point out to the wisdom of this University the extreme importance of combining the study of the ancient Greek philosophy with our Theological researches. The foundations of the evidences of Revelation will be

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greatly

greatly strengthened by observing with accuracy the light the Pagans actually obtained, and in discerning the insurmountable boundary which interrupted their farther progress. I have ever considered the works of Plato, Aristotle, and the moral writings of Cicero and Plutarch, as an avenue and portico to Christianity. I am convinced, from some experience, that minds imbued with the precepts of these men, strengthened with their wisdom, and elevated with their dignity, will be strongly *predisposed*, both from a review of their excellencies and defects, to close in with the evidences of that Gospel which brought life and immortality to light. The minds of our young men, so formed, would be inaccessible to the silly and ignorant sophisms of Voltaire, Rousseau, Condorcet, D'Alembert, and Volney. They would consider them, not as seductions to their virtue, but as insults to their understanding. Their rejection would be accompanied with an honourable disdain of the shallowness of the imposture offered to them. If to the other studies pursued in this University, these were added, if an investigation of the laws of God in the moral world were combined with that of his wisdom in the material system, the course of our education would then be consummate. The wisdom of a
Butler,

Butler, a Plato, and a Newton, would most assuredly lead to this inevitable conclusion, that “*Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God.*”

NOTE 2.

To the heavenly origin of laws and government we are directed by *Pagan*, as well as *Scriptural* authority. As a necessary preliminary to all legislation, Plato thus proposes and thus resolves this important question. ΘΕΟΣ, ἡ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνων, ὡς ἐνε, εἰληφε τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς τῶν νόμων διαθεσεως; ΘΕΟΣ, ὡς ἐνε, ΘΕΟΣ.

Plato, de Legibus, l. i.

In this opinion Cicero concurs. “Hanc igitur vides sapientissimorum fuisse sententiam legem neq; hominum ingeniis excogitatum nec scitum aliquod esse populorum sed æternum quiddam quod universum mundum regeret imperandi prohibendiq; sapientiâ. Ita principem illam legem & ultimam mentem esse dicebant omnia ratione aut cogentis aut volentis Dei. EX QUA illa lex quam *Dii humano generi dederunt* recté est laudata. *Cicero, de Leg. l. ii.* In this assertion, therefore, I have ventured to make, we may think ourselves fully warranted, by very high authority, as well as by the reason of the thing.

NOTE

NOTE 3.

The reprobation of such sentiments is expressed by Cicero, in very remarkable terms, worthy of *peculiar* notice :—" Quid ii qui dixerunt totam de diis immortalibus opinionem fictam esse ab hominibus sapientibus *reipublicæ* causâ, ut quos *ratio* non posset, eos ad officium *religio* duceret, nonne omnem religionem *funditus* sustulerunt ?"

Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* l. i.

NOTE 4.

Surely a more palpable sophism was never attempted to be imposed upon mankind than that which is held forth in the expression of the Sovereignty of the People. It is no principle of common sense, or of what is the best sense reduced to practice, the English Constitution, as settled and defined at the Revolution. The English Laws call the King our SOVEREIGN LORD ; if so, can any man obey two masters ? can any man be at the same time the Governed and the Governor ? The very purpose of civil government and of all laws, is to take the sovereignty out of the hands of those, who by the very nature of the thing can never exercise it,
and

and in whom, even in the smallest states, the attempt to exercise it has terminated in the extremes of violence, murder, and confusion, ending in the tyranny of those who inculcated this precious maxim. It must be a lack of knowledge only in their disciples which can enable those who place this palpable absurdity in the front of their political creed, to carry on the work of imposition for a moment. But I believe it a work of great difficulty, even in the worst of times, to overwhelm the reason and extinguish the suggestions of conscience in the English people. This difficulty those who have attempted it, have, God be praised, experienced. Doctrines are known by their fruits. The fruits of these, as exhibited in all ages, have been sufficiently bitter, even where internal anarchy was the only consequence; but in the present instance, it is not merely the domination and despotism of these bad men of our own nation we have to dread, but the perpetual subjugation of ourselves and our children to an inveterate foreign foe, which has by the assistance of these delusions, more than by the force of their arms, been enabled to plunder and enslave those whom they had previously divided among themselves. We read in Holy Scripture of "*the madness of the people,*" but never, I believe,
of

of the sovereignty of the people; and surely that madness would be most conspicuous in the present moment, if it precluded a view of the palpable effects of this doctrine, where it has been voluntarily adopted or forcibly obtruded. In the former case, the effects have been a complete subversion of all true liberty, and the severe, relentless, uncontrouled dominion of a few artful despots; in the latter, the ineffable blessing of legislation, at the point of the French bayonets, in the midst of famine and beggary. The whole progress of demagogues to despotism, thro' such like artifices, as it was sensibly felt, so was it most eloquently described by the political writers of antiquity. Scholars would do well to attend to the full discussion of this subject in the eighth book of the Republic of Plato, from which I have selected a few passages, in order to promote a perusal of the whole.

Ἡ γὰρ ἀγὰν ἐλευθερία εἰσὶν οὐκ εἰς ἄλλο τι ἢ εἰς ἀγὰν δουλείαν μεταβαλλεῖν καὶ ἰδιωτὴ καὶ τῇ πόλει. Εἰκοτὼς τοίνυν, οὐκ ἐξ ἄλλης πολιτείας τυραννὶς καθίσταται ἢ ἐκ δημοκρατίας. Ἐξ (οἶμαι) τῆς ἀκροτάτης ἐλευθερίας, δουλεία πλείη τε καὶ ἀγριωτάτη—Ἐκεῖνο τοίνυν (εἶπεν) ἐλέγον το τῶν ἀργῶν τε καὶ δαπανηρῶν ἀνδρῶν γένος, τὸ μὲν ἀνδρείοτατον, ἡγούμενον αὐτῶν· τὸ δὲ ἀνανδρότατον, ἐπομένον· οὓς δὴ ἀφωμοῖομεν κηφήσι, τοὺς μὲν, κέντρα ἐχούσι· καὶ τοὺς δὲ, ἀκεντροῖς.—
εἰς δὲ γε, οἶμαι, τὰς ἄλλας περιούτας πόλεις, ἑυλλεγοντὲς τοὺς
οὐλοῦς

οχλους, καλασ φωνας και μεγαλας και πιθανας μισθωσαμενοι, εις τυραννιδας τε και δημοκρατίας ελκουσι τας πολιτειας.—Μανθανω οτι ο δημος ο γεννησας τον τυραννον, θρεψει αυτον τε και εταιρους.—τουτο δη ομολογουμενη αν ηδη τυραννις ειη, και, το λεγομενον, ο δημος φευγων αν καπνον δουλειας ελευθερων, εις πυρ δουλον δεσποτειας αν εμπεπτωκως ειη, αντι της πολλης εκεινης και ακαιρου ελευθεριας την χαλεπωτατην τε και πικροτατην δουλων δουλειαν μεταμπισχομενος.

Plato, de Rep. l. viii, per Massey.

NOTE 5.

PLUTARCHUS. Περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας.—Of the connection and reciprocal actions of *atheism* and *superstition*, the sentiments of the calmest and profoundest thinkers have been uniform and decisive. The supposition that the one was exclusive of the other, and that the prevalence of the *one* precludes the *danger* of the other, is one of those prominent instances of *lack of knowledge for which a people is destroyed*. The generation of Atheism by Superstition is thus strongly and emphatically marked by Plutarch, in the above-mentioned invaluable treatise. Ἡ Δεισιδαιμονία τῇ Ἀθεολογίᾳ καὶ γενεσθαι παρεσχεν ἀρχὴν, καὶ γενομένη δίδωσιν ἀπολογίαν, οὐκ ἀληθεῖ οὐδὲ καλὸν· προφασεὼς δὲ τίνος οὐκ ἀμοίραν εὔσαν.

CHILLINWORTH asserts, to the same purpose, that, "Experience justifies that, and when and where

where *POPERY* has most absolutely commanded, there and then *Atheism* hath most abounded."

Preface to Charity Maintained.

Of the reproduction of *Superstition* from *Atheism*, the following sentiments of BISHOP BUTLER may convey very *seasonable* admonition. "The danger of *Superstition* cannot but be *increased* by the prevalence of *irreligion*, and by its *general* prevalence, the evil will be unavoidable. For the common people, wanting a religion, will take up with almost any *Superstition* which is thrown in their way : and in the process of time amidst the *infinite vicissitudes of the political world*, the leaders of parties will certainly be able to serve themselves of that *Superstition*, whatever it be, which is getting ground, and will not fail to carry it to the utmost length their occasions require." (This is the precise use which the *Republican* faction of this day is making of *Popery*.) *Bishop Butler's Sermon*, XXI. p. 339, 340. — God grant that such oracles of wisdom, as I have just cited, may not be "*Dei jussu non unquam credita Teucris!*" I cannot refrain from observing, that we find some vigorous and animated sentiments upon this head in BISHOP WATSON's late Address to the People of Great Britain, p.

33 and 34 —I repeat it, that the daggers of Superstition have been sharpened by the pretended *patriots* in both kingdoms. They seem to think that the atrocious cruelties inflicted upon the Protestants in Ireland would not have reached their FULL MEASURE without *their* incentives.

NOTE 6.

How justly and sagaciously Bishop Sherlock thought in *his day* upon this subject, appears from the following passage, which occurs in the 12th of his occasional discourses. “ The present Government and the Protestant Religion must stand or fall together ; Papists are by Principle enemies to both ; the more ignorant they are, the more determined and desperate enemies they will be ; as being free from the restraints of conscience and reflection, to yield blind obedience to their directors.—Whenever the public has been *distressed by internal commotions*, the strength of Popery in Ireland has been fatally experienced. The situation of affairs in Charles the First’s time, brought them to take arms, and the general massacre of the Protestants is still fresh in memory, in which thousands perished by cruelties unknown even among barbarous
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nations.

nations. At the Revolution, the Popery of Ireland endangered the Protestantism of the three kingdoms, by finding employment for the arms of England, when they were wanted elsewhere to support the cause of Liberty and Religion ; and should we ever be so unhappy as to see our Religion and Liberty put again to the chance of War, there can be no doubt *which side* the Irish Papists would take."

NOTE 7.

How large a share Popish superstition had in producing the deplorable and sanguinary scenes, which have laid Ireland waste, it is impossible for those who are reluctant not to admit, and must by all impartial men be immediately discerned and acknowledged. The active part which so many of their ecclesiastics have taken. the oaths of Protestant extermination so generally administered, the exemption of Catholics from the murders and ravages inflicted on the persons and properties of Protestants, the confessions of the leaders in the revolt, as reported by the Committee of both Houses of Parliament, leave it beyond a doubt, even to those who are ignorant of the practices, history, and principles of that superstition.

superstition. The reports of the secret Committee of the Irish House of Commons distinctly state, "that the Catholic priests had ceased to be alarmed at the calumnies which had been propagated of French irreligion, and were all well affected to the cause; that some of them had rendered great service in propagating, with discreet zeal, the system of the Union." *Vid. Appendix to Irish Committee, No. 30, p. 229.* It is not denied that other causes might conspire with the Popish influence. I am ready to admit, that in the early stages of this insurrection, many among the Dissenters might, with a view of destroying the established Church, co-operate with the general enemy of Protestants. Atheists, and the patrons of French politics, strongly saw in the predominance of superstition, less obstacles to their purposes, than in the sound scriptural and loyal religion of the established Church, and therefore heartily courted the alliance of the Romanists. But I am persuaded that the combined force of all the other causes could not have produced these deplorable events, unless it had been assisted by the strength, extent, and malignity of the Popish religion. The Dissenters in the North of Ireland, I have been credibly informed, alarmed with the fears of extermination, which

which their new associates so liberally denounced against all Protestants, had the judgement to discern the precipice to which they were hurrying, and to withdraw themselves in time from this nefarious combination. It is greatly to be wished that this their discretion may lead them to discern their true interest in both kingdoms better than in times past! Those who are acquainted with the *authentic repositories* of Popish doctrines, which they themselves admit to be the indisputable and irreversible standard of their faith, will not want the instruction of present events to inform them how precarious, and I had almost said, how chimerical it is, to expect that Roman Catholics should be substantially or permanently loyal to a Protestant government. As a body I mean, for that there are individuals whose humanity and loyalty would be shocked at the barbarous practices to which their principles lead, I am fully ready to acknowledge. But the enquiry is not what resistance a few minds endued with good nature and humanity will make to their own creed, but what will be the influence of the system upon the majority of its adherents. The history of all ages demonstrates what it has actually been. The tenor of events is uniform. The rebellion and massacre in Ireland in 1641,
and

and that of St. Bartholomew in France, and the *present* commotions in Ireland, all exhibit the same features. **SCIRES E SANGUINE NATOS!** They are equally discernible in the ferocious decrees of the councils of Lateran or Constance ; in the overbearing and inflammatory menace in the Pastoral Letter published in the name of Dr. HUSSEY, titular Bishop of WATERFORD, or in the *discreet, evasive* Pastoral Instructions of Dr. Troy, printed in Dublin, and reprinted in London, in the year 1793.—It is greatly to be wished that our Theological students would read not what is written *against* Popery, but what the Papists write *themselves*. It is to be wished that they should search for their doctrines where the Papists *themselves* tell us they are to be found. “ We wish (says Dr. Troy, titular archbishop of Dublin in his Pastoral Instructions, p. 103) that Protestants and others may judge of our civil and religious principles by our catechisms, by our books of devotion and religious instruction, by the Pastoral Letters of our Bishops, by the dogmatical institutions of Popes, by **THE DOCTRINAL DECISIONS OF OUR GENERAL COUNCILS**, and by our uniform conduct.” We agree perfectly with Dr. Troy, and wish that those were *well* known. I particularly recommend to those
who

who have access to them, the *BULLARIUM ROMANUM*, and above all, because it is the *highest* authority known to the Roman Catholics, the *CONCILIA GENERALIA*. The decrees of a legitimate general council are infallible and irreversible. In this *ALL* parties among them agree. I leave them to speak for themselves, and request Protestants to judge what degrees of mercy to their Protestant fellow-subjects, or loyalty to an heretical prince, is to be expected from them, when their power or numbers enable them to act. I have made large extracts from the 3d chapter of the 4th council of Lateran, held under Innocent III, in 1215, one of the most esteemed, and undeniably formal and legitimate. Not one tittle of it can any Roman Catholic disclaim.

“ Excommunicamus, et anathematizamus omnem hæresin, extollentem se adversus hanc sanctam, orthodoxam, catholicam fidem, quam superius exposuimus, condemnantes *universos hæreticos* quibuscunque nominibus censeantur: facies quidem habentes diversas, sed caudas ad invicem colligatas, quia de vanitate conveniunt in idipsum.

Damnati verò, sæcularibus potestatibus præsentibus, aut eorum balivis relinquuntur *animadversione debita puniendi*, clericis prius à suis ordinibus degradatis,

degradatis, ita quod bona hujusmodi damnatorum, si laici fuerint, confiscentur: si verò clerici, applicentur ecclesiis á quibus stipendia perceperunt.

Qui autem inventi fuerint sola *suspicionem* notabiles, nisi juxta considerationes suspicionis, qualitatemque personæ, propriam innocentiam congrua purgatione monstraverint, *anathematis gladio feriantur*, et usque ad satisfactionem condignam ab omnibus evitentur, ita quod si per annum in excommunicatione perstiterint, ex tunc velut hæretici condemnentur.

Moneantur autem, et inducantur, et si necesse fuerit, per censuram ecclesiasticam COMPELLANTUR sæculares potestates, quibuscunque fungantur officiis, ut sicut reputari cupiunt et haberi fideles, ita pro defensione fidei præstent publicè juramentum, quòd de terris suæ jurisdictioni subjectis, *universos hæreticos ab Ecclesia denotatos, bona fide pro viribus EXTERMINARE studebunt*, ita quòd à modo, quandocunque quis fuerit in potestatem sive spirituales, sive temporales assumptus, hoc teneatur capitulum juramento firmare.

Si verò dominus temporalis requisitus, et monitus ab Ecclesia, terram suam *purgare* neglexerit ab hac *hæretica FÆDITATE*, per metropolitanum, et cæteros comprovinciales Episcopos excommunicationis

cationis vinculo innodetur. Et si satisfacere contempserit infra annum, significetur hoc summo Pontifici, *ut ex tunc ipse vasallos ab ejus fidelitate denuntiet absolutos, et terram exponat catholicis occupandam, qui eam exterminatis hæreticis sine ulla contradictione possideant, et in fidei puritate conservent*, salvo jure domini principalis, dummodo super hoc ipse nullum præstet obstaculum, nec aliquod impedimentum opponat, eadem nihilominus lege servata circa eos, qui non habent dominos principales.

Catholici verò, qui crucis assumpto charactere ad hæreticorum *exterminium* se accinxerint, illa gaudeant indulgentia, illoque sancto privilegio sint muniti, quod accedentibus in Terræ sanctæ subsidium conceditur.

Credentes verò, prætereà *receptores, defensores et fautores* hæreticorum, excommunicationi decernimus subiacere, firmiter statuentes, ut postquam quis talium fuerit excommunicatione notatus, si satisfacere contempserit infra annum, ex tunc ipso jure sit factus infamis, nec ad publica officia, seu consilia, nec ad eligendos aliquos ad hujusmodi, nec ad testimonium admittatur. Sit etiam intestabilis, ut nec testandi liberam habeat facultatem, nec ad hæreditatis successionem accedat. Nullus prætereà ipsi super quocunque
negocio,

negocio, sed ipse aliis respondere cogatur. Quòd si fortè judex extiterit, ejus sententia nullam obtineat firmitatem, nec causæ aliquæ ad ejus audientiam perferantur. Si fuerit advocatus, ejus patrocinium nullatenus admittatur. Si tabellio, ejus instrumenta confecta per ipsum, nullius penitus sint momenti, sed cum auctore damnato damnentur. Et in similibus idem præcipimus observari. Si verò clericus fuerit, ab omni officio, et beneficio deponatur, ut in quo major est culpa gravior exerceatur vindicta.

Si qui autém tales postquàm ab Ecclesia denotati fuerint, evitare contempserint, excommunicationis sententia usq; ad satisfactionem idoneam percellantur. Sanè clerici non exhibeant hujusmodi pestilentibus ecclesiastica sacramenta, nec eos *Christianæ præsumant sepulturæ tradere, nec eleëmossynas, aut oblationes eorum accipiant*. Alioquin suo priventur officio, ad quod nunquàm restituantur absque indulto sedis Apostolicæ speciali.

Adjicimus insuper, ut quilibet Archiepiscopus, vel Episcopus per se, aut per Archidiaconum suum, vel idoneas personas honestas, bis aut saltem semel in anno propriam parochiam in qua fama fuerit hæreticos habitare, circumbeat, et ibi tres vel plures boni testimonii viros, vel etiam, si expedire videbitur, totam viciniam jurare compellat,

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quod

quod si quis ibidem hæreticos sciverit, vel aliquos occulta conventicula celebrantes, seu à communi conversatione fidelium, vita et moribus dissidentes, eos Episcopus studeat indicare. Ipse autem Episcopus ad præsentiam suam convocet accusatos, qui nisi se ab objecto reatu purgaverint, vel si post purgationem exhibitam in pristinam fuerint relapsi perfidiam, canonicè puniantur. Si qui verò ex eis juramenti religionem obstinatione damnabili respuentes, *jurare fortè noluerint*, ex hoc ipso tanquàm hæretici reputentur.

We see the *text*, and have not far to look for the *comment*. I leave them *both* to the judgement of my readers. Experience shews us that this doctrine is not antiquated. The titular BISHOP OF WATERFORD, Dr. HUSSEY's Address to his Diocese, both in letter and spirit, proves Dr. Troy's (the titular Archbishop of Dublin) observation to be perfectly just. "*The religious principles of Roman Catholics being UNCHANGEABLE, they are applicable to all times.*" Dr. Troy's *Pastoral Letter to the Catholics of Ireland*, 1798. Yet such is the system, and these the men with whom our wildest republicans are now courting a warm and close alliance.

I cannot but observe that this subject has been
treated

treated with great force, courage, and perspicuity by Dr. Patrick Duigenan, a member of the Irish Parliament, in a most masterly address to H. Grattan, republished in London, for Wright, Piccadilly. I think Dr. Duigenan deserves the thanks of every loyal Protestant throughout these kingdoms, who has the sense to discern and the virtue to vindicate that genuine state of civil and religious liberty which has been substantially secured by the establishment in church and state for above a century.—Many shallow and superficial notions are corrected in the above-mentioned most seasonable and manly production, and the sagacity and vigilance of Protestants directed to objects which from an unfortunate coincidence of circumstances have been too long out of view. His observations (in p. 127) upon the necessary connection of Popish supremacy in spirituals, with its Tyranny in Temporals, are strong and convincing. And in controverting the ordinary opinion, that the power and principles of the Roman Catholics are less operative and obnoxious from the downfall of the Pope's Sovereignty in Italy, we find a very popular and general, tho' a very radical error, most powerfully and ably combated.

NOTE

NOTE 8.

**Imperium facile iis artibus retinetur quibus
initio partum est.**

Sallust, de Bello Cat.



NOTE

